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Near East & South Asia

MOROCCO

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Computer Science Agreement Signed With South Korea

LD2703225292 Rabat MAP in English 1249 GMT
27 Mar 92

[Text] Rabat, March 27 (MAP)—Morocco and South Korea concluded here [word indistinct] a cooperation agreement in computer science, provided for by the recommendations of the joint Moroccan-Korean commission which convened last year in Morocco.

Under the accord, South Korea will extend data processing material to be used for modernization of the Moroccan administration.

The document was initialed by head of international cooperation at the Moroccan Foreign Department Abdelmalek Charkaoui and Korean Ambassador to Morocco Ri-hun Ho.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Solidarity Committee Reiterates Support for Libya

LD3103103392 Tripoli JANA in English 1441 GMT
30 Mar 92

[Text] Rabat, Al Rabiah [March] 30, JAMAHARIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The National Moroccan Committee for Solidarity with the Great Jamahariyah reiterated its stand and solidarity with the Great Jamahariyah in resisting the neocolonialist campaign which is being conducted by the United States, Britain and France.

In a communique published in the the Moroccan newspaper "BAYAN AL YAWM" the committee asserted that any draconian measures taken against the Great Jamahariyah will only serve to escalate and erupt the crisis to a level which would threaten the security, sovereignty and stability in the Mediterranean basin.

In its communique, the committee expressed its straightforward denunciation of any measure which would directly escalate tensions, would entail circumventing international laws, and would threaten the Great Jamahariyah's security and sovereignty.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

King's Initiative Toward Constitutional Revision

92AF0524A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
6 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by 'Umar Hasan al-'Alawi]

[Text] The bill that Moroccan monarch King Hassan II announced for a new and revised constitution was not a total surprise, because the prevailing political climate suggested such an initiative on the part of the Moroccan monarch. What is exciting about this is the selection of 3

March (the 31st anniversary of King Hassan's ascension to power), a significant gesture at this particular stage. It is marked by a cohesive domestic front with regard to two basic issues in particular: the [Western] Sahara issue and the need to consummate the unity of the land and the triumph of national sovereignty, and the issue of driving the democratic process forward to fit the latest developments in Moroccan society, which has experienced deep, intrinsic transformations ever since the current constitution was put into effect (1972). The Moroccan monarch said in this regard: "Our success in getting through our triumphant march is due to the cohesion of the closely-knit domestic front, which we fully realize is our life saver, which we continue to safeguard and preserve by uniting the nation, mending the rift, warding off catastrophes, and helping the nation avert obstacles and perils."

The Moroccan monarch took advantage of the existence of this domestic front to announce his initiative by proposing for referendum the new constitutional bill, thus putting a stop to the controversy raging amid the political parties, the three opposition parties in particular: the Istiqlal Party, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, and the Organization for Popular and Democratic Action. Two weeks ago, these parties arranged a joint seminar on constitutional reform, during which they made presentations reflecting their views. But, in the face of the royal initiative, they will find themselves faced with a well-prepared and integrated bill that can be put forth for referendum.

The Moroccan monarch backed his initiative with findings that put it in its general framework, as it does not represent purely legal procedures totally detached from Moroccan reality. King Hassan noted that Morocco is making extraordinary progress, and has a genuine determination and an enduring will to cross the threshold of the 21st century armed with the necessary means of progress and advancement.

"For, in this situation, the proposed constitutional bill does not come under this general framework as a means of development and growth that can, with God's help, lead Morocco to the new era awaiting it," as the Moroccan monarch put it. By announcing the royal initiative, Morocco is certain to experience in the next few months a political fever such as it has not experienced for several years, albeit somewhat different in intensity from the feverish spells that preceded it, particularly in the early seventies and eighties. The proposed amended constitution Morocco's fourth constitution in the last three decades (the 1962, the 1970, and the 1972 constitutions).

The declaration of the first constitutional bill in December 1962, witnessed vehement debates after King Hassan II made it public. The opposition objected to the way it was proposed, deeming it a "granted" constitution. By this, we mean the important organization that split from the Istiqlal Party—namely, the National

Union of Popular Forces—which at that time was calling for the election of a constituent council to draft the nation's constitution.

The National Union, its political arm in particular, announced its boycott of the referendum on the constitution, a difficult decision that gave rise to heated debates within its ranks. All the other tendencies, however, ultimately succumbed to the boycott, for which the Union paid dearly.

The first December 1962 constitution led to the holding of general elections in May 1963, and to the formation of the first Moroccan parliament, which failed to serve its legal term because it was devastated by the March 1965 events in Casablanca, announcing a referendum and suspending constitutional action in April of the same year. Consultations were held among the political decision-makers on how to get out of the crisis, but the abduction of the Moroccan leader Mehdi Ben Baraka in Paris in October 1965, was a negative development that poisoned the air anew, thus missing the chances to realize a united domestic front. Consequently, Morocco passed through a critical period that caused it to waste many opportunities.

With viewpoints pulling in different directions, the 1970 constitution was put forth, but it was short lived because of the two abortive coup attempts in July, 1971, and August, 1972. These two bitter experiences called for basic revisions, hence the 1972 constitution, which is still in effect until now.

While the early years of his regime were not free of negative repercussions because the preceding years of collision between the regime and the opposition were being mulled over, the political-relations process got underway with the dawn of 1974 and became more distinct in 1975, the year of the Green March and the liberation of the Western Sahara.

In an effort to fulfill basic requirements, minor issues are either ignored or overlooked, but with their objective buildup and the inevitable societal progress, such issues reach a point where they must be resolved with all the urgency that this entails. This is what is happening now, and what prompts us to say that, in the next few months, Morocco will experience a political fever, but under a united domestic front that sets it apart from previous similar situations.

During these months, a referendum on the Western Sahara is expected to be held, followed by one on the amended constitution before the general elections, which may be held on schedule, next summer, or in the fall at the latest, according to what King Hassan II told THE NEW YORK TIMES.

The king insisted that, in order to have credible elections, he is seeking to have free, impartial and transparent elections. If the administration is up to the task and aspirations expressed by King Hassan II, then the upcoming elections are bound to "help everyone to know

one's standing in national life, and, therefore, to use an accurate yardstick to gauge one's political conduct in their light," as stated in the royal address.

[Boxed item]

Opposition Parties Demand Constitutional Reform

It is difficult to take stock of the opposition parties' demands for constitutional reform, because they vary in terms of these parties' differing "ethics." However, the constitutional reform seminar, recently held in Rabat by the Istiqlal Party, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces Party, and the Organization for Democratic and Popular Action, makes it clear that they raise fundamental and substantive issues aimed at transforming the constitution into an instrument that would allow parliament to play its role to the fullest, and the government to comply with its resolutions and oversight. The seminar distanced itself from raising a purely legal controversy. [The following are quotes from the seminar:]

- "The 1973 constitution's revision has turned into a national cause at the level of the primary, fundamental issues."—Abdelrahman al-Yousfi
- "The constitution of tomorrow must guarantee the building of society on a strong foundation, and must not be confined to dazzling appearances to be exported abroad."—Mohamed Boucetta
- "The higher national interest urgently calls for the introduction of substantive reform to the existing constitution."—Mohamed Ben Said

There are also slogans raised by the participants, such as:

- "The current constitution has lost its credibility, internally and externally."
- "The need to change the constitution to give expression to a society yearning for democracy and growth."
- "The government's emergence from the majority and the constitutional designation of its functions is a genuine expression of the meaning of multipartisanship."

It has been noted that the seminar did not bring out any recommendations or resolutions, but was rather content with hearing and debating presentations made by the participants.

UGTM Secretary Talks of Hopes for Coming Elections

LD3103091692 Rabat MAP in English 1313 GMT
28 Mar 92

[Text] Rabat, March 28 (MAP)—Secretary General of the General Union of Moroccan Workers (UGTM) and member of the executive committee of the nationalist opposition Istiqlal Party Abderrazak [Afila] and the coming general elections would lead to a genuine [words indistinct] based on fair competitiveness and effective control.

Guest of the "Man in Focus" program aired Thursday by the Moroccan TV channel 2M, Afilal said any unionist action is a political action for one cannot forbid a worker from getting interested in the country's general politics in the economic, social, cultural and other fields.

Of the relationship between the UGTM and the Istiqlal Party, Afilal explained it is part of the party's relations with masses' organizations [words indistinct]. A UGTM affiliate is not necessarily member of the party, he said underlining that the struggle for the workers' interest cannot be dissociated from the struggle for democracy.

Dealing with the general strike of last December 14 (that resulted in bloody riots), Afilal held the government responsible of the strike for, he said, the government has not met any of the claims and grievances submitted by the trade unions. He said he was aware that the strike is a double-edge weapon but it is a constitutional right the workers resort to in order to back their claims. He said the government lacks "the political will" to go forward, on the basis of new ideas.

Afilal also dealt with the workers' economic and social situation at large, saying that without the improvement of the situation of employers, one cannot improve the situation of workers. Underlining that the Moroccan consumer must be a key element in the production process, Afilal called for the settlement of the problems facing the production sectors such as taxes and high interest rates.

Political Awareness Among Country's Youth Viewed

Maghreb Journalists Speak

92AF0557A Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI
in Arabic 7 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Noureddine [Mftah]: "Maghreb Impressions of Youth and Politics"]

[Text] It is true that Moroccan youth are the ones concerned with this dossier, but the Maghreb dimension continues to be a common concern. Thus, on occasion of the presence of Maghreb journalists in our country, we decided to get their impressions of youth and politics in their countries (Tunisia, Algeria, and Mauritania).

Warda Bechir, TUNISIA-AFRICA PRESS AGENCY:

Tunisian youth are almost totally disinclined to engage in struggle-oriented political action. But this doesn't mean that Tunisian youth aren't politicized, because the opposite is true. Politically, Tunisian youth are extremely perceptive and they aspire greatly to participate in sound and beneficial political action.

The only thing is, there is a crisis of confidence between Tunisian youth and the political elite that runs state affairs or that is actively engaged in the parties opposed to the government. This elite hasn't yet developed the

ideal method and the right language to convey its message to the youth. To date, and even in wake of the change that has occurred in the country, this elite continues to use a wooden language that fails to attract the youth and to respond to their ambitions and concerns. The student youth have also gone through an abortive experiment, especially in the secondary schools and institutes, by way of the so-called School Youth or Constitutional Youth Organization (in relation to the old Destourian [Socialist] Party or the new Destourian Grouping). The ruling party created these cadres in the educational institutions, but they have failed to attract students, because their activities are ordinarily dictated by the party's higher cadres and because students rarely contribute to developing these activities.

The third reason is that the successive governments have failed to fulfill their promises regarding youth problems (developing educational curricula, creating job opportunities, providing recreational and cultural facilities, altering the youth-oriented media programs, and so forth).

Students are the faction most highly politicized, as far as youth rights are concerned. But students also refuse to get involved in the political game in its most banal sense, and they cling to their independence from all political parties and tendencies. The only exception that must not be disregarded and that concerns, in fact, all the Arab countries, is the fundamentalist Islamic phenomenon. Since the mid-1970s, large numbers of [secondary] school and university students have joined in political action and the daily political struggle within the ranks of the former Islamic Tendency Movement (now al-Nahdah).

Since the change that occurred in the country on 7 November 1987 [President Ben Ali], there is a serious and evident tendency to involve youth in daily political action. This is especially noticeable in the increasing number of symposiums devoted to youth and youth problems, in the changing message that the media aim at the youth, and in the efforts launched to change the educational curricula, so as to focus the national educational programs on the daily political issues that contribute to forming the youth's identity and that motivate them to join in managing their own affairs. But the truth is that the results continue to fall short of expectations. The crisis of confidence between the Tunisian youth and the political elite persists, because issues continue to be tackled with speeches and intentions, because the youth's daily reality hasn't changed, and because the signs looming on the horizon don't bode well for education and employment in particular, and for recreation and culture in general.

Observation: The youth's disinclination to get involved in political action pertains not only to political parties, but also to social and humanitarian organizations.

Ahmed Ould [Hedamiya], Mauritanian Student at Higher Press Institute in Rabat:

Mauritania's historical and geographic position has a direct impact on the youth's position in the current phases. Mauritania attained independence only a few decades ago, and its democratic experiment continues to falter and to be a simple experiment when compared with that of the countries that have known political and economic independence for centuries and that have fully established their rules and laws. Though Mauritania has gained a political independence recognized by the entire world, it still faces the danger of economic, cultural, and political subservience. This forms the main component of the various internal and external conflicting tendencies with which society is confronted.

In the face of this situation, Mauritania's youth, who constitute 51 percent of the total population, have shown only great zeal for their country. They have examined all the political ideologies in order to save their country. They embraced Marxist principles, liberal theories, and pan-Arabist tendencies in the late 1960's. They absorbed the pan-Arabist aspiration and interacted with it. They didn't do it out of blind imitation, but out of belief in the principle and goal. They defended the pan-Arabist demands and objectives, understood the background of what was being built, and explored the basis on which they made their selection and founded their method. This struggle continued to be waged behind the scenes and led to a confrontation between one of the political tendencies, namely the Nasirists, and the government. This confrontation paved the way for Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya to assume power in 1984. Taya promised to establish democracy in the country, which had been a well-known demand of Mauritania's politicians. It can be said that Mauritanian youth, both educated and uneducated, are interested in politics and that they have a political education that varies according to their cultural or tribal tendencies.

The talk about youth and politics compels to say that the youth have split into factions. Some of them have remained true to the principles for which they have struggled for a long time, and they have formed parties, such as the Alliance Party which is, in fact, a Nasirist party whose base consists fundamentally of youth. This party experienced no conflict in the latest presidential election, even though not all Nasirist youth voted for the party candidate. The rest of the youth are divided among other parties.

The president's party has the lion's share of the remaining youth, who are organized within a tribal framework.

But it is worth noting that Mauritanian youth, whom we have already classified as ideological or tribal, have a fundamental role in political life. The first type makes his appeal in the name of political ideology and the latter uses tribe and region as his podium and uses them to achieve personal objectives. For tribal youth, political

action is not an objective but a means, whereas ideological youth see that politicization is a means to deliver people from the conditions under which they live. In any case, this type of youth have continued to be interested in politics and they have assumed a prominent place in society, influencing it and being influenced by it.

But the question that dictates itself is: Will the parties be a means to overcome the tribe, or will they entrench the tribe?

Saliha [Maouche] from Algeria's AL-SHA'B [THE PEOPLE, newspaper]

Prior to the bloody October 1988 riots, Algerian youth, who represent 60 percent of the people, had little interest in domestic politics. With Algeria's entry into the age of party pluralism, established by the February 1989 constitution, Algerian youth's interest in politics grew by virtue of the numerous developments experienced by the country. The youth began to join parties, each according to his tendencies. We find, for example, that the youth are influenced more strongly by the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], which constitutes a major political force when compared with the other Islamic tendencies. Moreover, the FIS has adopted the method of direct criticism of the Algerian Government, thus gaining a great degree of trust among the youth, who had already lost confidence in the single party, which was viewed by this segment of the youth as the cause of the economic crisis. It should also be noted that a considerable segment of the youth have joined the very many democratic parties in the arena. We find that the educated class and a large number of tribes—namely the Amazigh class living in Tizi Ouzou and Bejaia—are enrolled in these democratic parties.

As for the other parties, especially the communists, their youth base is almost nonexistent, despite the ideologies on which they rely. Their strugglers are comprised of a certain elite ranging in age from 35-40 years. The youth have not joined these parties because they are detached from youth concerns. Moreover, the majority of the youth view these parties as atheist. Consequently, they don't approach them.

We shouldn't forget, either, that a large number of Algerian youth don't join parties because they have no confidence in any of the existing parties. We know that the youth suffer from severe crises, such as unemployment (1.2 million unemployed Algerians) and the housing crisis that has made housing inaccessible. For these reasons, especially because the political parties (more than 50) have no economic programs capable of pulling youth out of the chronic crisis in which they live, we find that the crisis experienced by the youth is a crisis of confidence in the successive governments that have ruled the country. We should note that Algeria has seen three governments replaced in less than three years.

Young Women Interviewed

92AF0557B Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI
in Arabic 7 Mar 92 p 4

[Article by Najah Batal: "Outcome of Surveys on Political Awareness Among Moroccan Women; Curious, Regrettable Conclusions; 25 Percent of Women Consider Politics as Moroccan Government Market; 75 Percent Have Reached Voting Age But Small Percentage Has Participated in Elections; Most Women Questioned Do not Recognized Phrase 'Oversight Petition'; 86 Percent Recognized Socialist Union Party and Istiqlal Party"]

[Text] Many speak of the Moroccan woman's hardship and of the forms of marginalization that entrench her inferiority. The constitution confines its dealings with women to the political aspect. Rather, it reduces this aspect of women's exercise of their political rights to merely the right to vote. The personal status provisions cancel a woman's personality and will, and deny her any personal initiative. In all matters pertaining to her personal life, a woman needs somebody to act on her behalf or somebody to whom she gives the power of attorney.

This is in addition, of course, to keeping women away from the state's decision-making centers. Moreover, women's presence in the political parties themselves is a weak presence.

This is what others say about the Moroccan woman. What does she say about herself and about her cause?

What are her political interests? To start, does she have any political interest or awareness? Does she exercise her rights, few as they are, or does she give them up, thus contributing personally to entrenching her inferior status?

In an attempt, though a simple one, to probe the Moroccan woman's political awareness, to move with her closer to her problems, and to find out her political interests and the degree of her awareness of her position, we have distributed a number of survey forms containing a number of questions pertaining to phrases, institutions, organizations, or figures connected with our country's political and social spheres. In distributing the forms, we made sure that they went to women from various societal sections and groups, ages, social affiliations, educational and job levels, to employed and unemployed young women, and to housewives.

When the answers were examined, curious and regrettable conclusions were reached simultaneously. The answers demonstrated the varying awareness levels among those questioned and their varied political interests, which reflected ambiguity, a vacillating vision, or a faulty and confused idea of the phrases, with a few exceptions.

What Is Politics?

From the women's answers to this question, we have noticed that there is a great difference in their political interests, depending on the degree of awareness of each; her educational, social, and environmental level; and the extent of her direct or indirect contact with the daily national issues.

It has also become evident that a large number of women know nothing about politics. In their view, politics is ambiguous and unfathomable, has no specific definition, and cannot be given a specific meaning. Wafa, a secretary, has said that "politics is a hard currency!" Fatima, (an employee, grade seven, arts graduate) has given a liberal answer, saying: "Politics has no specific meaning. Everybody understands it his own way." Zobeida, (baccalaureate), ties politics to propriety, good behavior, and "diplomacy."

To another group of women, politics means the banned and the prohibited. It is a fearful word that means curiosity and intervention in what doesn't concern one. Nadia (24, illiterate, a domestic) has said: "He who follows politics will find his head shoved into government affairs!" Some women have refused to talk about politics out of fear, as emphasized by Hasna, an employee and a university science freshman, who has said: "We cannot discuss politics." Nadia explains her reason for refusing to talk about politics, saying: "We don't discuss politics. What is the matter with you? Do you want me to be jailed?" This has been the position taken by 25 percent of the women questioned.

From reviewing these forms, it has become evident to us how frightened and scared some women are of political action. In their mind, politics is associated with the government. They take a position on politics because of their direct or indirect experience with politics. S.A. explains that perhaps the fear "is due to those who were killed, executed, or jailed. In our country, political action is not the same as in other countries where citizens speak out without fear. When we mention the word 'politics,' many people say 'may God save us from it.' It is associated with the government and the government can, in their opinion, arrest them. Moreover, if the government is mentioned in front of them, they say 'may God save you and keep you away from it.'" Thus, they equate the idea of politics with the idea of rulers, and rulers are the ones who engage in politics. The citizen has no right to engage in politics. He leaves it to the government and the rulers. With this attitude, the citizen entrenches the policy that is practiced over and against him. To overcome this situation, the citizen has to engage in politics.

This concept linking politics to rulers is found in the answers of a significant number of the women questioned. Leila and Amina, both students, say that politics is a system or method applied by those in charge of the state to manage its affairs. This concept is reaffirmed by Y.F., who sees that "politics is the art of managing and tending the people's affairs and interests by the rulers."

What Is Political Pluralism?

For a group of young women, the meaning of political pluralism is vague. In their mind, the idea is tied to chaos and controversy. Wafa, a 30-year-old woman, has said: "Political pluralism is disagreement in political opinion. A multiplicity and abundance of parties will lead to ruin, in my opinion!"

Explaining political pluralism, Leila and Amina say that it is the "multiplicity of parties and of political systems, and the absence of a unified management in the country." B.Z. has offered a somewhat clearer answer, tying pluralism with democracy and free expression, and saying that "pluralism is the search for a free system that entitles people to free expression."

Excluding the above women and those who answered the question "What is politics?" the majority of women refused to answer this question. Summing up her refusal, one woman said: "Why do you want me to answer you on political pluralism when I haven't answered you on politics?"

What Is Democracy?

The answers to this question have been clearer and more specific. Jamila, a woman who holds a baccalaureate in science, has said: "Democracy is a Greek word and it means the people's rights."

Fatima, a secretary born in 1960, said: "It is an organized guidance that seeks to achieve all the people's rights." Khadija, who has a baccalaureate in science, was clearer and close to the correct meaning of the word "democracy" when she said that it is "the people's rule, meaning that the people have the right to intervene in government." N.K. sees that democracy means "equality and justice," whereas L. and A. point out that it means "guaranteed and equal rights and the people's self-rule."

In the answers of some women questioned, we sense a sort of apprehension and lack of conviction about what actually exists in our Moroccan society. They believe that the word democracy has become fluid in the speeches of the parties and the government because it is used so much. Everybody talks about democracy but the people lack it, and they don't feel it in their daily life. The arena abounds with such words. But according to women's opinions, women don't feel the true presence of these words in anything other than speeches and parades. Wafa, a 30-year old secretary, has said: "Democracy is a word that we hear, and we hope that it will be applied." B.F. adds: "It is the people's self-rule. More pragmatically, it is execution of the people's will through their representatives, who are supposed to be the best reflection of this will."

What Is a Labor Union? Name Some Labor Unions You Know

Only a few of the women questioned identified the best-known unions in the Moroccan arena, which are, in order, the Democratic Labor Confederation [CDT] and

General Union of Moroccan Workers [UGTM], and tied them to the 14 January 1990 strike. In addition to these two unions, some identified the Moroccan Labor Federation [UMT]. Some women couldn't identify a union but were able to point it out through its offices. Wafa, a 30-year old secretary, said: "A labor union is tantamount to a committee that is concerned with workers' issues, such as the one located in Darb Omar," meaning the CDT. Fatima—seventh grade, arts, born in 1960—said: "A union consists of company representatives to defend the workers' rights. The union that I recognize is the one located on Royal Armed Forces Street," meaning the UMT.

H., a science college freshman born in 1969, has said: "It is probably some sort of company. Unions probably emanate from companies. The union I know is near the Tobacco Control Agency."

Khadija has come up with a new union, saying: "A union is tantamount to a council that works to apply the labor law and to defend workers' rights. It works for the benefit of the worker. I know the Socialist Labor Party union," perhaps meaning the CDT.

The most significant and clearest answers were the following:

N.K.: "A union is a labor grouping that elects those who speak in its name regarding its demands. The unions I know include the CDT and the UGMT."

B.F.: "A union is a vocational social institution whose goal is to organize its members in order to defend their economic, industrial, commercial, or agricultural interests. The most important Moroccan unions are the CDT and the UGMT."

What Is Parliament and Who Are Its Members?

The answers to this question have been interesting. There are those who didn't know the Parliament speaker or its members. But the most curious answer was given by H., a secretary and a science college freshman born in 1969:

"We see them on television. They look sleepy when we see them at work."

KH., who holds a science baccalaureate, has said: "The parliamentary assembly is an office that combines the entire government. It is convened twice a year and it discusses all matters pertaining to the state, such as the budget and so forth. Its president is Osman and its members are the ministers, the parliament speaker and his deputies, the opposition parties, and the right."

B.Z., another woman, has said: "It is a council for deputies who are consulted on the country's constitution. Its president is Osman and its members are party chairmen and elected deputies."

The answers of some questioned women were highly concentrated. H. said: "It is a council that includes members who represent the parties. It represents the legislative authority."

N.K.: "Parliament is the legislative authority."

It is noticed that these answers are deficient, especially regarding Parliament membership, which includes people's representatives from the parties and representatives of unionized workers. The answers have either omitted these representatives or added elements that do not exist in the parliament.

What Is a Petition for Oversight?

Most women questioned said they were ignorant of this phrase. The answers were as follows:

Nadia, an illiterate 24-year old woman: "I don't know."

F., grade seven, arts, born in 1960: "I recall the phrase but I don't know what it means."

Meanwhile, there were important and detailed answers regarding the [parliamentary] petition for oversight [multamas al-raqabah]. N.K., a 29-year-old college sophomore studying English literature, has said: "Under Moroccan law, opposition deputies may demand a petition for oversight of the government if they notice violations in the implementation of government projects." Y.F. has said: "A petition for oversight is [word indistinct] to withhold confidence from the government. If opposed by the parliament, the government continues to shoulder its responsibilities."

What Is a Referendum?

The majority of women questioned expressed the belief that a referendum is a means to explore opinions and gauge public opinion on issues concerning the people. It is, as Wafa has said, the "best means to make the ordinary citizen feel that his opinion is respected." According to N.K., a referendum is "surveying public opinion on an issue not mentioned in the law." Khadija clarifies it further, saying: "It is tantamount to an election held to determine a country's fate." B.F. adds that a referendum is tantamount to "taking the people's opinion on an issue that concerns them. It is a procedure initiated by the king and its outcome is binding to all."

Some of those questioned admitted that they don't know what a referendum means, even though their educational levels are not bad. Some of them have a baccalaureate degree, for example.

How Many Times Have You Participated in Elections?

A large part of the women questioned, 75 percent, are of legal voting age but for one reason or no reason, a small percentage of them have exercised this right once or twice.

Zobeida, a housewife, explains her reason for not participating in elections by the fact that she doesn't have a voter's card, saying: "As long as I don't have this card, I have no right to vote!"

From the answers of a group of other women, we feel that they have no confidence in elections, in the manner in which they are conducted, or in those elected. Fatima—an employee, grade seven, arts, born 1960—has said: "I have participated with a 'no' because all those preceding him (meaning the neighborhood's representative) claimed that they would change the conditions in the neighborhood. But this has not happened!" She believes that the elected are not worthy of trust and have no credibility.

N.K. goes even further, tying the election process to the marginalization of women as a result of the discrimination that marks the way women are treated in elections. She experienced this marginalization in her experience with the recent referendum on extending the current parliament's term. She said: "This referendum has had a bad effect on me. Instead of giving me both papers (one for yes, one for no), they gave me just one for yes. I asked about this and they answered: 'You must vote yes.' This happened with women only. As for men, they had the choice of yes or no. If anything, this shows that women are despised and that their rights are devoured."

What Is Opposition, What Are the Opposition Parties, and What Parties Do You Know?

It has become evident that the parties that are well-known to a good percentage of the women questioned are the following: The Socialist Union of Popular Forces [UFSP] and the Istiqlal Party—86 percent. Fifty-five percent of the women added the Party for Progress and Socialism [PPS], 47 percent mentioned the People's Democratic Action Organization [OADP], 36 percent mentioned the National Rally of Independents [RNI], and 34 percent mentioned the Constitutional Union Party.

Some of the women questioned added some nonexistent parties, as in the case of Leila and Amina, two students: "We know the Socialist Party, the Labor Party, the Istiqlal Party, and the Liberal Party." By the Labor Party, perhaps they mean one of the unions.

Wafa, an employee born in 1960, knows the "Istiqlal Party, the Consultative Party, and the opposition!"

The most interesting answer to this question was provided by Fatima, a former secretary, arts graduate, born 1960: "I know the Socialist Union, the Democracy Party, and the Federalism Party, and isn't the government some sort of a party?"

Some of those questioned said that the Socialist Party is a rightist party. One woman, i.e., one percent, had the Istiqlal Party as an opposition party. Seventy five percent of the women continue to believe that the Istiqlal Party is a rightist party. Twenty five percent of those

questioned said they know nothing about the opposition parties or about the opposition.

Those who did recognize the word have defined it as the parties' opposition to the government. N.K. has said: "Opposition is the parties' opposition to some issues adopted by the government." Khadija, who holds a science baccalaureate, has said: "The opposition parties are the minority parties in Parliament. Opposition is the adoption of a policy that differs from the government's vision of the nation's issues."

Mention the Names of Some Ministers

From the answers we received for the questions on the ministers, it is obvious that all women questioned—99 percent—knew the full name and characteristics of the minister of interior, despite the difference in their educational and social levels, in their jobs, and in their ages. They linked their knowledge to the bloody riots experienced by Morocco in 1981, 1984, and 1990. The percentage of those who recognized other ministers, whether by appearance or by one of their obvious characteristics, has varied. For example, one woman said: "Yes, I recognize that bald one." About another, the remark was "that one with the slick hair." But they couldn't mention the names, which they said they had forgotten.

Only one woman said that the minister of interior is Azzedine Laraki.

Do You Know an Important Moroccan Female Personality

The answers to this question agreed on a group of women who have gained prominence in the political field, such as struggler Thoraya Sakkat and sister Aisha Belarabi; in acting, such as Thoraya Jobran; in sociology, such as Fatima Marnisi; in psychology, such as Dr. Asya Aksabi; or in the medical field, such as Dr. Hakima Homeish.

Of those questioned, 25 percent showed ignorance and lack of knowledge of any important female personalities. One percent denied the presence of any important women in Morocco.

What is interesting is that one of the women questioned mentioned the name of Dr. 'Aishah Bint al-Shati [Egyptian].

Upon reviewing these sample answers, we notice that, despite the disparity and difference in the degrees of political awareness among Moroccan women, what is tangible in these answers, and what seems to be the common problem among all, is that these women are no longer connected with the mechanisms of progressive national political action. Perhaps the reason is that this action has not provided the infrastructure capable of receiving women, of holding dialogue with them, and of accomplishing clear and fundamental slogans to mobilize women's capabilities behind it. This is due to the vague and deficient lines that the democratic national

organizations devote to the women's issue. On the other hand, women find themselves faced with feeble official options and government tendencies on matters pertaining to women in general, and to young women in particular, whether in terms of women's participation in political action and decision-making, or in terms of respect for women's social, economic, and cultural rights and gains, which have been eroded repeatedly and have been subjected to violations and infringements. Also, among those questioned are some who believe that the Moroccan society is a male society that keeps women out of the political game played within the parties and within the social, cultural, and intellectual organizations and bodies. This belief is demonstrated more clearly in the answers to the following question:

What Have the Parties (Left and Right) Accomplished for Women's Causes? What Have They Done To Enable Women To Shoulder Political Responsibility?

The answer of one of the women questioned (an experienced attorney) is characterized by dissatisfaction and by lack of conviction. She has said that the parties' projection of the women's issue lacks some courage. She points out that the "official side, or the so-called government parties, has nothing but slogans to project. As for the opposition parties, there is some difference between them, and it is a difference that encourages some and impedes others, because its determination to preserve the status quo is stronger than its desire for change."

A professor who teaches French and holds a Ph.D. said: "Parties view women as a means of gaining votes. Government parties exploit women for propaganda only, whereas opposition parties exploit them to gain votes. Meanwhile, none of these parties has accomplished anything for women's causes. Women's presence in these parties is weak."

On the parties' relationship with women's cause, Shadia, a mathematics teacher, has said that she doesn't "understand anything. The political parties change their positions. They have accomplished nothing for women. As for women's presence, it is superficial, because women occupy a very narrow space within the parties' programs. Women's role is a secondary role intended solely for getting votes. Women are marginalized and the responsibility for this marginalization is shared by women and the parties."

Explaining the declining presence of politicized women, she has said: "I believe that one must make a distinction between a woman's activity during her university education and her activity after this period, especially when she becomes a housewife. During her education period, a woman has the time and the resources that permit her to attend student meetings. After marriage, her duties increase. Moreover, it is often difficult for a woman to continue acting in the same manner when she is married. A student's mentality may change after marriage. Her vision of society and her approach toward it may also change."

[Boxed item]

Testimony by Lobji Mina

Frankly, whoever examines the features of political awareness among Moroccan women is perplexed. This perplexity is justified by the real situation, with all its elements, beginning with school curricula, which have nothing other than goodwill to tie them to the constant effort to keep pace with the ongoing developments; and ending with the audio and video media, which work to entrench the status quo.

What is her situation?

The Moroccan woman has a prominent presence within the Moroccan youth. She studies and excels. She enrolls in universities and specializes. She may even dream of achieving a prominent presence as a singer on the stage or as a winning runner standing on the winners' podium. She may even realize her dream if she is doubly fortunate: Fortunate to belong to a well-to-do family and fortunate to belong to a "liberal" family that permits her to use all the means to realize the desired dream.

Frankly, again, our political community enjoys evident pluralism. But there is no gradual difference between extreme right and extreme left. Rather, there is a right, with its harmonious institutions, and a left, with its harmonious institutions. Therefore, after one is separated from the womb of political illiteracy, one has to make a choice between left and right. What follows is the cry of separation and then of the final choice or affiliation which, regrettably, occurs incidentally in many cases.

Frankly, for the third time, the condition could have been less tragic if affiliation were justified, and the absence of affiliation justified. To allege superficially that we have reached a level of civilization for which we are envied is arguable, and to allege outwardly that we belong is also arguable. But to live "without a religion and without a creed," is tragic. [end boxed item]

Students Questioned

92AF0557C Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI
in Arabic 7 Mar 92 p 5

[Article: "Testimony on 'Youth and Politics' Issue"]

[Text] Can we talk about complete political awareness inside the Moroccan university campus? How do students discuss political problems? Is it still possible to talk about the Moroccan university's political and cultural illumination?

These are some of the questions we addressed to some of the students we interviewed in the course of preparing this file.

S.N., Arts College, Ain Chock: "I get involved in politics at the university through the discussion symposiums which are usually organized by parties to the political

conflict. The most important observation concerns the vast gap that separates the "discussion symposiums" from the student masses.

"In fact, these symposiums attract only a very small percentage of students. The others remain on the sidelines. This fact raises numerous questions about youth and politics:

"Why has the gap widened in this stunning manner and why doesn't political debate attract the student masses? These are some of the questions that occurred to my mind while pondering your questions. But these worrisome facts cannot prevent us from asserting that the Moroccan university is currently experiencing the worst stage of its existence. Moreover, the officials' will prevents the university from playing its full role in developing a student who is aware of life's profound issues and who realizes the nature of the political battles posed by our society's current condition."

M.D., Law College, Casablanca: "The first question that must be raised is: What is meant by political awareness, and why ask if it exists within the university campus? Why not ask if it exists in most aspects of our public life?

"If what is meant by 'political awareness' is the effect of politicization in general, then there is no doubt that this awareness exists. The university campus has turned into an arena for evident political struggle. Moreover, this struggle often assumes various forms of violence: Material violence, with which some factions settle arguments by clubbing their opponents, and symbolic violence, through which such factions insist on abolishing the other opinion and establishing the logic of the single and sole opinion.

"The gist of what I wish to say is that the politicization phenomenon exists, but that politicization is practiced or expressed in a devious manner. What students should demand is restoring political debate to its normal democratic course, in which opinions and ideas battle with the logic of pluralism and diversity."

N.N., Law College student, Casablanca: "Before answering these questions, we must keep in sight the given facts of Morocco's true situation, which are different now from what they were in the 1960s and early 1970s.

"I have read the previous part of your file on 'youth and politics' which does, in fact, stress [the difference] between today's students and yesterday's students. This is a foregone conclusion. Before making any endeavor to portray the current student scene, we must raise the following points: Suppression conditions are different now from what they were in the past; The mechanism of suppression is more violent and dangerous today, regardless of what some people may say about the severe suppression of the 1960s and 1970s. Suppression is the same, but it assumes modern forms these days, perhaps led by the attempt to dehumanize people by recruiting the media, by stripping campuses of their scientific and

educational significance, and by planting those strange entities that are called AWACS [as published, perhaps slang term]. These elements have contributed greatly to driving the youth, particularly students, away from our country's profound political problem. Therefore, it isn't surprising that student debates take another direction, focusing fundamentally on soccer, singing stars, and so forth. It is also no surprise that the youth steer away from politics in favor of what Dr. Mohamed Jasous has called 'aimlessness.' I believe that the role for all of us, whether the youth or the political and educational organizations, is to try to curtail the impact of the above-mentioned negative influences. I will content myself with these observations and I hope that I have stayed close to the questions asked."

D.S., Arts College, [Benmasik]: "I consider 'youth and politics' two sides of a problem acutely experienced by the Moroccan student. Regardless of how hard the youth try to avoid the problem, they inevitably fall into it.

"Politics is a fact in all daily relations: in the authorities' insistence on banning the National Union of Moroccan Students and in planting the [AWACS]. It can be even said that the "indifference of the youth," an idea on which a number of researchers agree, is, in itself, a given political fact that deserves to be studied and analyzed. As for me, I engage in political action through my belonging to a progressive faction that struggles for the unity of the student movement and for establishing democracy in the universities. Therefore, I believe that the best way to deal with the 'youth and politics' file is to struggle to lift all kinds of prohibitions under which the Moroccan student and Moroccan university live. In this struggle, it is essential to surpass the cliquish and fanatic logic that characterizes the activities of some factions. It also means raising the slogan of democracy in thought and conduct. Democracy is the ability to communicate with, and listen to, the other party, regardless of how much we agree or disagree with its ideas."

Political Repercussions of Various Sector Strikes

92AF0539C London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Feb 92
p 5

[Unsigned article: "Teachers' Strike in Morocco Escalates Confrontation Between Government, Opposition"]

[Text] Rabat—Workers in the educational sector in many parts of Morocco held a strike yesterday to urge the government to raise their salaries, review the retirement system, and resolve the situation of those who were suspended from work because of the events of 1981 and 1984.

Meanwhile, with postal workers expected to hold a similar strike tomorrow, Thursday, Moroccan transport workers in the country's largest city, Casablanca, are continuing their labor strike. The confrontation between opposition parties, which control the largest centralized unions, and the government of Dr. Azzedine Laraki is [clearly] continuing in view of these strikes. Despite

improvement in the country's economic situation, based on statements by government officials in the financial and economic sectors, there is a general feeling in populist quarters that the government has ignored the social problems that were behind the outbreak of civil unrest in the past.

Mr. Ahmed Osman, speaker of the Moroccan parliament and leader of the "National Rally of Independents," recognizes this and says that his party understands the workers' demands, but the special nature of the stage through which the country is passing makes it imperative that "priority be given to the [Western] Sahara dispute." In a political gathering of his supporters in the city of Fez, which has been the scene of violence recently, Osman said: "We have followed with concern all of the protest activities, and we are working with dedication to see to it that a strike becomes not merely a legitimate act provided for in the constitution, but a civilized manner of informed expression and social maturity."

Political quarters are viewing the statements by Osman, whose party holds five ministerial portfolios in the present government, as the beginning of an evolution in choices for a party that has directed numerous criticisms at the Laraki government, accusing it of having failed to keep government commitments.

However, as long as the confrontation between the government and opposition parties, stubbornly clinging to their positions, continues, it will be difficult to bring about any political understanding, at least until the next elections are organized. It could be Ahmed Osman, who has the esteem of senior figures in the opposition parties for having played a reconciliatory role in restoring some lost balance to political life in the country, particularly since yesterday the opposition Socialist Union [of Popular Forces, USFP] Party drew a link between "the battle for constitutional reforms and the social battle." It said: "Any failure to acknowledge political opposition activities or the workers' protests will mean that the required political maturity is lacking, and that old methods of attempting to impose faits accomplis are continuing." This is a warning to the government, which the opposition has accused of neglecting economic problems.

Educational System Faulted for Unemployment

92AF0629A Casablanca MAROC SOIR in French
12 Mar 92 p 1

[Editorial by Ahmed Alaoui: "Education and Employment"]

[Text] The problem of unemployment among young graduates is actually a problem of inadequate training and that implicates Morocco's education system.

If joblessness among young people is to be eliminated, the entire educational system—the entire system of training—must be reexamined. Our existing system of teaching is essentially designed to impart knowledge to

young people without any economic objective. Periodically, new graduating classes of hundreds of young people are sent out onto the job market with impressive arrays of diplomas but no immediate, practical usefulness, and their numbers are increasing every year. In its role as educator, the State fails to take into account the marketplace, employment prospects, and the country's development and needs.

That is the real cause of this widespread problem, which grows more serious every year.

The State, nonetheless, spends considerable sums of money to educate young people. In Morocco, schooling is free, from the primary grades through the university level. For that reason, the education budget covering both operating costs and equipment amounts to nearly 30 percent of the State's general budget, and all of that goes to educate young people who cannot readily be employed because their training does not match the needs of the country.

Therefore, the time has come not only to study supply and demand on the job market, as the CNJA [National Council for Youth and the Future] is now doing, but also to reexamine the educational system as a whole, because it must be structured around needs, planning, economic development, and the marketplace.

We need an educational system to train useful and efficient producers, technicians, and managers, not humanists.

Educational reform is all the more urgent in that the same phenomenon reappears every year to take a greater toll. It is therefore important to reflect on reforming education in order to make it more useful and productive, along the lines of the Mohammedia School of Engineering whose every graduate since the school's opening has found work, and ISCAE [expansion not given] whose graduates are in high demand as managers. The two schools are concrete examples of what should be done. True, it is indispensable that all young people be provided with what we have termed a Guaranteed Minimum Education by making primary education and the first cycle of secondary education compulsory. On completing this minimum, students should then be guided into a vocational, technical, or academic program, in accordance with both their abilities and the needs of the country.

That is how things are done in Germany where more students are enrolled in vocational and technical programs (90 percent of the total) than in academics. In Germany, unemployment has been reduced to a minimum and companies readily find the technicians and managers they need.

The problem must be corrected as soon as possible, because the children who are born this year will be eight years old in the year 2000; the education they will begin at that time must ensure their future and the country's economic development. And to those who wonder what

the future of these children of the 21st century will be, we would answer that their future will be as good as the education they receive.

Prisoners Rights Affirmed; Conditions Televised

*92AF0629D Casablanca MAROC SOIR in French
11 Mar 92 pp 1, 3*

[Text] In Monday's edition of its 2000 evening news program, the French television station Antenne 2 broadcast a report on human rights in Morocco drawing on statements made by Mr. Driss Basri, minister of the interior and information.

The report, by the journalist Gerard Beaufigl, was introduced as follows by the Antenne 2 anchorman: Today, a new look at human rights in Morocco: For the first time, a television camera has been officially allowed into a Moroccan prison. The images you are about to see were filmed in Rabat where the authorities seem intent on giving every appearance of openness: [sentence as published]

Here is the text of the report accompanied by images of the Rabat-Sale prison.

"Rabat-Sale, the model prison, opens its doors for the first time. The prisoners here are serving sentences or are awaiting judgement for nonpolitical crimes. No comparison to the stories of detention in the sinister internment camp of Tazmamarte, now officially destroyed. Even though the inmates live ten to a common space, human rights are respected here. The visiting rooms are not restricted, and visits are allowed. Regardless of past controversies, the authorities state that Morocco no longer has any political prisoners."

Interviewed in the course of the report, Mr. Driss Basri stated: "No one is being held nor was anyone held in the past for their political views and there are two essential reasons for that: First, Morocco is a democracy and, as you know, no democracy can coexist with the presence or existence of political crimes."

"Second, the rule of law is respected in Morocco, and consequently, the judiciary branch exercises its powers of oversight with complete independence and essentially guarantees the rights of defense."

Gerard Beaufigl: "The King of Morocco spoke of the future, of democracy. Is your concept of democracy today synonymous with democracy as it is called in the Western countries, for example?"

Mr. Driss Basri: "Yes, as His Majesty the King has said, democracy is an evolving ethic and concept of life. This concept of life is, of course, shaped by each country's state of development. To state something that everyone already knows, the philosophy of Montesquieu regarding

the spirit of the laws can be readily applied to the concept and quality of democracy in every country. Indeed, we hope that our democracy will catch up to those in the most developed countries. But the democracy we now have happens to be quite consistent with our country's state of development."

Gerard Beaufig: "Constitutional reform, election plans: As of his last royal anniversary speech, Morocco's king has launched a process that, somewhere, had been going nowhere. This move toward democracy is fundamental for a country that has a seat on UN Security Council for a two-year period." (MAP)

Loan To Support Economic Reform Program

92AF0524C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
9 Mar 92 p 9

[Article by Muna al-Bustani: "Week After European Protocol Freeze: \$400 Million from African Bank to Morocco To Back Second Phase of Economic Reform"]

[Text] The African Development Bank [ADB] has decided to offer Morocco three loans totalling \$400 million, the first one to go directly to the state treasury; the second for four Moroccan banks; and the third for an irrigation project in the farming sector. Loan agreements were signed last Thursday.

The visit of ADB President Babacar N'Diaye to Morocco to sign the loan agreements served as an occasion for Moroccan officials to renew their invitation to ADB to take part in negotiations this month with the World Bank, concerning assistance for the second phase of the economic reform plan. Morocco is seeking a higher ADB contribution to finance this plan, valued at 100 million European Currency Units [ECUs] (\$136 million) to compensate for the European Parliament's freeze on EEC contributions, which were expected to amount to \$70 million in ECUs, citing political conditions in Morocco, a pretense the Moroccan Government has strongly rejected.

Within the framework of the three signed loan agreements, about 75 million ECUs (about \$102 million) have been allocated to the state treasury as a subsidy for the financial sector reform program in Morocco. Fiscal authorities are seeking to establish indirect ways to monitor the money supply and bank loans, to deregulate interest rates, and update laws regulating banking activity.

In the same context, four Moroccan banks received 90 million ECUs (about \$122 million) out of the total loans that ADB has agreed to offer Morocco. These banks include the Moroccan Foreign Trade Bank, the Popular Bank, the Real Estate and Tourism Loan Bank, and the Moroccan Commercial Bank. This government-guaranteed loan is aimed at subsidizing these banks' revenues to raise funding for small and medium-size company investment projects through long- and medium-term loans, giving precedence to the industry and tourism sectors (about 200 companies).

The ADB has earmarked 130 ECUs (about \$178 million) for the irrigation project, which includes a 64,000-hectare area in the [Dakala, presumably Dkakla] region. The first phase, which will take five years to complete, will cost about \$400 million. Besides the ADB, the European Investment Bank (\$71 million), and the African Development Fund [ADF] (\$100 million) will contribute to the project's costs. The project will take 12 years to complete, and is expected to enhance the government's returns from the [Messira] Dam project in the same area.

It is noteworthy that Morocco holds a 3.7 percent share (569.77 shares) of the ADB group's capital, and is the major beneficiary of its loans. The ADB group, which includes the ADF, has granted Morocco a total of about \$2 billion from 1970 to 1991.

The farming sector is at the top of this group's concerns in Morocco. The ADF has allocated, to date, about 68 percent of its total financial assistance to the Moroccan economy; the ADB contribution in this regard is 28 percent.

The group's program for the current year includes financial assistance for developing the public health sector and financial contribution to the fifth potable water project. This is in addition to contributions to the second phase of the economic reform plan in Morocco.

ADB Aid Said To Reflect Strong Economy

92AF0629C Casablanca MAROC SOIR in French
12 Mar 92 p 1

[Editorial by Ahmed Alaoui]

[Text] The African Development Bank (ADB) has signed new loan and guarantee agreements with several private Moroccan banks: BMCE [Moroccan Foreign Trade Bank], BCP [People's Central Bank], CIH [Real Estate and Hotel Credit Bank], and BCM [Commercial Bank of Morocco]. In so doing, the ADB becomes yet another institution to express confidence in Morocco and the Moroccan economy, following the good marks Morocco received from the World Bank, the stand-by loan granted by the IMF, the loan agreement between the IFC [International Finance Corporation] and private Moroccan banks (BCM, BMCE, Credit du Maroc, and Wafabank) for which no government guarantees were required, and the last rescheduling arrangement agreed to by the Paris Club on Thursday, 27 February.

Under the agreements, the structural reforms undertaken by Morocco—as well as public and private investment programs—will receive 400 million dollars in financial support from the ADB, which has become a major international bank.

These agreements are yet another reflection of our country's good economic and financial health, as lenders are known to prefer wealthy borrowers, and in the international arena, they increasingly prefer countries in which they have confidence—at the financial and economic level, but especially at the political level. In the current context, indeed, a variety of positive factors indicate that Morocco is healthy and able to inspire increasingly greater confidence.

Thus, Morocco is reaping the rewards of the readjustment policy launched in 1983 by Mr. Abdellatif Jouahri and tenaciously pursued by Mr. Berrada. We should therefore continue down the same path. But it can now be said that the hardest part is behind us and the goal to be achieved—a balance-of-payments surplus and

lower budget deficits—is within our reach. This will enable Morocco to have a solid and stable currency that can be made convertible without pain and, consequently, to attract increasingly larger amounts of foreign and domestic investments to develop our infrastructure and our economy and make good use of our nation's riches.

"I believe that, God willing, we will reach the end of the tunnel by 1993 and that the dirham will be convertible. That is not an idle wish; it is a reality recognized by the international banking community," His Majesty the King declared to *La TRIBUNE DE L'EXPANSION* in September 1991.

His Majesty Hassan II dealt with this subject again when he spoke to Italian employers in Rome on 26 November 1991: "One of our major goals is that by the end of 1992 (next year, that is), our currency the dirham will be convertible. That is more than just the wish it once was; it is now a plan. Thanks be to God, with courage and abnegation we have weathered several years of austerity that we were advised to endure, by our friends at the International Monetary Fund, in particular. We expect to reach the end of the tunnel—to use the common expression—and, God willing, make our dirham convertible in early 1993."

In a word, the task is to reach the point at which the economic and financial advancement of our country mirrors its political situation—a highly exceptional one in the world in which we live and the product of His Majesty the King's persevering effort.

Growth in Foreign Investments Reported

92AF0629B Casablanca MAROC SOIR in French
27 Mar 92 p 1

[Text] The Council of Government held a meeting on Thursday chaired by the prime minister, Dr. Azeddine Laraki. As its first order of business, the Council examined a proposed decree to revise and supplement the decree granting special status to scientific personnel at the National Institute of Agricultural Research (INRA).

The purpose of the proposed decree is to establish procedures for determining the official status of the INRA's staff of researchers so that it may be raised in view of their strategic importance to the institution.

The Council also heard and discussed a report by the minister-delegate to the prime minister for foreign investment, Mr. Mohamed Mdaghri Alaoui, on the program of action and the method used by the ministry to encourage foreign investment and simplify procedures.

In his report, the minister drew attention to positive trends in foreign investment as indicated by the number of countries represented among Morocco's foreign investors (European countries in particular), the number of economic sectors attracting investment, and increased volumes of investment that grew 55 percent between 1988 and 1989 and 60 percent between 1990 and 1991.

The minister went on to emphasize the need to continue to grant favorable investment terms; promote the conditions that will encourage domestic and foreign investment; and facilitate contact with a greater number of investors by opening a reception office at the ministry's headquarters given the ministry's role of serving investors as their main point of contact, in accordance with the royal directives contained in His Majesty the King's speech to businessmen during his visit to Italy. (MAGREB-ARAB PRESS AGENCY)

New Import Program To Be Launched

92AF0524B Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 20 Feb 92 p 4

[Article: "New General Importation Plan To Go into Effect 1 March"]

[Text] The Ministry of Foreign Trade disseminated a special bulletin notifying importers of the new general importation plan that will go into effect as of 1 March.

The bulletin-statement, Number 01/92, is coupled with an addendum of goods that require an advance import license, or remaining goods on the "B" list, and good that do not require an advance license. It also includes methods of importation and transitional requirements, which remain in effect in anticipation of the enactment of the foreign trade law.

According to official circles, this is a station on the way to total liberalization of imports in 1993 and the repeal of the general importation plan, which has been in effect since 1967, to be coupled with total liberalization of measures related to dishonorable competition, random importation, and other measures apt to ward off any harm to domestic production sectors.

A reading of the bulletin-announcement reveals that farm and animal commodities are at the top of [the list of] goods that require an advance license. It is evident that subjecting these commodities to the license requirement is necessitated by protection and health control considerations, as well as by domestic economic considerations and the economy's ability to adjust to the liberalization of certain imports. The list also includes strategic commodities and other goods of pressing interest.

Other commodities of strategic significance to the government retained on the "B" list are various fuels, at the top of which is crude oil. This means that the only oil tariff plan to secure revenues for the treasury, while liberalizing prices and imports, will not come into being any time soon. Moreover, coal has been kept on the list of commodities requiring an advance license.

Likewise, pharmaceutical commodities have been accorded protection, and the great majority have been kept on the same list, something that indicates, more than anything else, a desire to maintain their high cost on the domestic market.

Then there are textiles, clothing, underwear, cars, and motorcycles.

Rabat Prepared To Agree to Union Demands

92P40161A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 92
p 5

[Excerpt] AL-HAYAH was informed by Moroccan political sources that Moroccan authorities are headed toward an agreement with a set of demands put forward by the central labor unions which were behind a number of strikes in the educational, health, and transportation sectors.

It was decided that a meeting should be held soon to bring together competent officials and union representatives who organized the strikes or who call for other action. The meeting is to look into the possibilities of implementing some of these demands, the cost of which, representatives say, would reach hundreds of millions of dollars, a sum the Moroccan treasury does not have at the present time. [passage omitted]

Drought Relief for Marrakech Available

92P40168A Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 12 Mar 92 p 5

[Excerpt] Marrakech Wilaya benefited from a financial package totaling 3.5 million dirhams within the framework of government measures to combat the effects of the drought. This will make available for town centers more than 160,000 dirhams per workday in support of a national labor rehabilitation program. The governor of Marrakech, Dr. Mohamed Belmahi, observed that this package is not sufficient to meet the needs of the provinces and prefectures of the wilaya. [passage omitted]

Farmers' Situation in Tetouan Province Described

92AF0535A Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 4 Mar 92 p 5

[Article by Abdesslam Mashan: "Report on Agricultural Conditions in Tetouan Province Area: 30% of Fall Crops Not Saved by Above-Average Rains"]

[Text] Before the ground was watered recently by welcome rains, farmers in the province, like those in other provinces, were very worried. Although the drought here was not as severe as elsewhere, low agricultural production and difficult topography caused drought in Morocco's other provinces to have a negative impact on this province, which imports its fodder and agricultural needs subject to supply and demand, without price control. Farmers therefore continually complain, whether the drought is in their area or elsewhere. Furthermore, most of the rains that fall in the area either flow from the mountain slopes into the sea unchecked by any dams, or fall on the roofs of the tourist complexes that have replaced the rich pastures of yore. These things notwithstanding, the region is still considered to be agricultural raw material in need of the attention that

would turn its poverty into wealth if it were given responsible agricultural planning.

That is the reason for this report, which takes the form of a review of official statistical data. Perhaps the data will stimulate special interest by those concerned. Despite their official character, the data will help the observer deduce a series of contradictions and indicators.

Geographical Data

This inquiry concerns the agricultural district of Tetouan and Larache provinces, an area of 368,970 hectares, of which 265,800 hectares are in Tetouan Province.

Sadly, most of the land of the region is not devoted to agriculture, despite the abundant rains. Only 114,340 hectares are devoted to agriculture. Tetouan Province's share is 42,340 hectares of this land. It is divided as follows:

- fall crops—86,310 hectares,
- spring crops—20,180 hectares,
- fruit trees—7,850 hectares:
- total—114,340 hectares.

Thus, any discussion about the area's agriculture is primarily a discussion of fall crops. These were the crops damaged by the light or nonexistent rains in January and most of February, with losses estimated at 30 percent of the fall crops. The rains that fell recently may be enough to save the remaining 70 percent.

Fall Crops

At the beginning of this agricultural season (1991-1992), 96,710 hectares of fall crops were planted. This area equals 80 percent of the arable area. Tetouan Province contains 59,290 hectares of these crops, Larache province contains 37,420 hectares.

Notwithstanding the province's need for pasturage, these crops included only 7,000 hectares of animal feed, compared with 42,500 hectares devoted to grain. The disparity is even clearer in Larache, where 2,420 hectares of pasturage were planted, versus 27,000 hectares of grain.

The pasturage problem in the region becomes more serious every year. Livestock raising has entered a dark tunnel that lacks an integrated view by the various sectors, so that only the old methods continue to be used on the natural pastures in the absence of supervised model farms. The latter require a policy of adequate agricultural lending, while natural pasturage requires regular rains and protecting the soil from erosion. The latter requires wide-scale reforestation—and so forth. Water is pivotal in all these things. Therefore, the farmers—especially meat and milk producers—were obviously worried before the recent rains. Their anxiety was not being met by any active measures.

Rainfall

We have said that 30 percent of fall crops were damaged, although the first four months of the agricultural year had an above-average rainfall of 475.6 mm, 79.4 mm above the 22-year average of 396.2 mm.

Unfortunately, the rain falls in localized, brief downpours, causing damage both to natural pastures and to fall crops. The following table elucidates the problem.

Monthly Rainfall Compared to 22-Year Averages

Month	Rainfall	Difference From 22-Year Average for Month
September 1991	59.6 mm	+47.9 mm
October 1991	97.2 mm	+38 mm
November 1991	24.1 mm	-65.9 mm
December 1991	182.6 mm	+59 mm
January 1992	112.1 mm	+0.4 mm

Although the rains fell abundantly on the highlands, measures to protect against erosion, and facilities to gather and store water in various ways were needed. Only in this way will the future of agriculture be anything but haphazard, especially the livestock sector, which is acquiring great importance because of the region's climate and topography.

Livestock Raising, Status of the Region

According to statistics of the livestock department of the provincial agricultural service, the region has 515,852 head of livestock: 321,957 in Tetouan Province and 193,895 in Larache Province. They are distributed as follows:

- 111,192 cattle (82,358 in Tetouan Province),
- 100,053 sheep in Tetouan Province, 99,085 in Larache Province,
- 113,703 goats in Tetouan Province, 51,819 in Larache Province,
- 25,843 horses and donkeys in Tetouan Province, 14,157 in Larache Province.

Cattle are numerous in El Fenidak (Tahremt), Beni Gorfet, Arba Ayacha, and the straits (El Mellaliyne). They are fewer in Martil and Tetouan city.

Sheep are numerous in Beni Gorfet, Arba Ayacha, El Fendek, and Zaaroura. They are fewer in Martil, Tetouan city, and Zaouiet Sidi Kacem.

Goats, the most abundant livestock in Tetouan Province, are numerous in Tahremt, Tnine Beni Harchen, and Jemaa El Oued.

Horses and donkeys are numerous in Beni Gorfet, Zaaroura, and El Fendek. All these animals are threatened by famine whenever rain is scarce and are destined for early slaughter, wasting this resource, which is difficult to replace. There have been no arrangements other

than 1,000 tons of concentrated fodder, subsidized at 50 percent by the government. Half of the amount was put at the disposal of the milk cooperative for distribution to members located in Tetouan Province. The other half is being distributed to the rest of the farmers. The same cooperative has also benefitted from another 500 tons for members located in Larache Province.

When we speak about the subsidized price for concentrated fodder, we are speaking of a theoretical price of only 1,200 Moroccan dirhams per ton. In the wake of increasing demand, the fodder enters the black market. We have learned that farmers are buying some kinds of fodder at 3,500 dirhams a ton. As for the bran produced by mills, its shipment outside the province constantly works to produce an artificial crisis, so that prices rise with no control.

It should be noted that pasture crops this year occupied 12,000 hectares, mostly in Oued Laou, which is a village famous for livestock raising and whose fodder needs are growing by the day.

In sum, the region's reliance on this field generally demands planning by all departments so as to encourage farmers to serious, productive initiatives. Foremost among the things that should be planned is the creation of model farms and guaranteeing their yield. The livestock department in the province has provided us with a table showing its effectiveness in providing farmers with guidance and intervening when necessary. However, some farmers took the initiative to declare that the department had abandoned its job. One stated that cattle had died because of a lack of veterinary tools for use in cases of flatulence and that there were other similar cases.

Thus, interest in agriculture must parallel the frequently alleged interest in tourism; otherwise, we will say that the province is having bad luck in both.

Safi Province Socioeconomic Situation Examined

92AF0539B Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 29 Feb 92 p 5

[Unsigned article: ""Working Paper on Political, Socio-economic Conditions in Safi Province Presented by Ahmed Ben Zaydiya at Safi Independence Team Symposium"]

[Text] Ahmed Ben Zaydia, member of the Istiqlal Party's Parliamentary Team for Unity and Equality and Safi Province member of parliament, brought a working paper on political and socioeconomic conditions in Safi Province to the proceedings of the Istiqlal team symposium held 25-26 [March] in this city.

"In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate; peace and prayers be unto the great messengers.

"Mr. Secretary General, Mohamed Boucetta; Mr. Chairman, Lt. Gen. Mohamed Khalifa; fellow members

of the Istiqlal team, brothers and sisters: peace and the mercy and blessings of God, Most High, be upon you.

"I am pleased to present to you a summary of the Safi Province working paper. Safi is a province whose land and people are suffering the woes of a blind policy pursued by the government. Consequently, the land and people are paying the tax of this policy, which has turned every condition for growth and prosperity in the various cultural, social, and economic areas into manifestations of backwardness. Modernization of Safi Province actually began in 1965. It has tremendous agricultural, industrial, maritime, and tourism resource potential, which itself is sufficient for the province to develop and prosper, raise its inhabitants' standard of living, and to make an effective contribution to the growth of our national economy, provided that these potential resources are utilized properly and rationally.

Farming is the backbone of social and economic life in this province, because of the diverse agricultural potential which God gave to its inhabitants: production of grains, tomatoes, sugar beets, vegetables, livestock, olives, forest utilization, and various types of legumes. While over 62 percent of the province's villagers farm 540,000 hectares of agricultural land, this only represents a minuscule percentage of its economic activity, in terms of the human and natural potential found there. Agricultural production and returns are below the desired level, because of a number of important factors: solid planning and high-quality farm extension advice is lacking; the necessary improved means of operating are barely existent; and few, even none, of the types of assistance needed in this area are available—irrigation canals in particular, even though the province has important groundwater resources of about 88 million cubic meters. Another problem is the illegal utilization of public lands. Individuals of standing and influence, but unrelated to farming, are taking them over, creating a situation that will be of no service to agricultural development. It would be better if these officials were to work to improve the nearly 162,000 hectares of land still unsuitable for farming because rocks have not been cleared, as well as to take the necessary measures to protect farmers adjacent to forested areas and their property from the spread of [feral pigs. Even more important, they should protect farmers from the high-handedness and harassment that they are subjected to by certain officials who still feel that repression and coercion are the only ways of dealing with their fellow countrymen, given the absence of any meaningful agricultural reform to improve the populace's socioeconomic level and to halt the phenomenon of rural emigration, which is becoming only more impossible to resolve in the face of the lack of basic essentials of human life, whether it be in terms of electricity, drinking water, roads, or any of the other essentials of life.

In the economy of Safi Province, ocean fishing is rated second, after farming. Although its resources once kept it in first place in terms of sardine catch, fish production has likewise fallen off noticeably in recent years. At the

same time, the port of Safi has dropped to ninth place, after having been the second [largest] port in the kingdom. This is essentially due to the failure to provide it with the equipment it needs, or to expand the ship-building area or the loading and offloading area as required for it to develop in a manner that would allow it to receive large commercial vessels and play its fundamental role in raising the level of ocean fishing and commercial navigation in the province. Safi Province has tremendous tourist potential because of its location on the sea, its numerous and varied archeological sites, its quiet atmosphere, its temperate climate, and its various traditional industries. The province's pottery industry holds first place in Africa and has received important international acclaim. The weaving industry is no less important than pottery, but this tourist product remains unexploited. As a result, it provides almost no return.

Although the province has numerous and varied mineral resources, including phosphate, barite [barite], salt, gypsum, cement, and other minerals, they do not contribute to stimulating socioeconomic life in a manner that brings general prosperity to its people. All the people get in return is the waste left behind and the pollution, which has become so widespread and dangerous to the land and to man in the absence of any measures to restrict its spread or to combat it. At the same time, this mineral wealth should have been a fundamental element in the establishment of an integrated industrial fabric to contribute abundantly to the economic recovery of the province.

Just as the province's productive sectors have received virtually no care, so the social sectors have been subjected to neglect, lack of concern, and marginalization. This is true for the education sector, which has fallen off noticeably due to the despair which has tossed the majority of the oppressed out onto the street in the absence of a policy giving them an incentive to continue their study. [The reasons are] failure to put schools near students; the closing of many boarding schools; lack of facilities in the desert (electricity, drinking water, roads) that would enable educators to carry out their mission as required; and the failure to create a college at Safi to take in its baccalaureate holders, despite sworn promises made by the ministers over eight years ago to open a university center in the province. We viewed this initiative as a long-awaited sign of hope, because of the many diverse hardships suffered by the province's students, who go to Kadi Ayad University in Marrakech or Hassan II University in Casablanca or El-Jadida, and the material and morale difficulties they represent. These major obstacles prevent many students in the province from continuing their university studies, even though Safi is known as one of the kingdom's provinces where the success rate for passing the baccalaureate certificate has clearly improved. Moreover, the province now has nearly 1 million inhabitants. When the province of Essaouira is added in, the number climbs to nearly 2 million people, or nearly one-tenth of the kingdom's

population. Also keep in mind that some adjacent provinces are only 70 to 100 kilometers apart, and yet they have university centers.

The same situation is true for the health sector. It has declined greatly, due to the scarcity of essential modern equipment, specializations, a multi-specialty clinic, medicine, and other requirements for treatment and the practice of medicine. This does not even include youth, housing, and other social services that are considered the most basic of human rights in any civilized society.

The province's problems in the various socioeconomic sectors are negatively reflected in its level of growth and income. Despite its potential and capabilities, the province's share in economic activity is no more than 12 percent of the national product. The problems are also reflected in the populace's standard of living. It would take many long hours to recite all of them, so I will limit myself to presenting the most urgent needs:

- Expanding commercial and industrial zones, giving them the basic facilities needed to encourage investors and encouraging them to participate in the province's industrial and commercial revival;
- Improving the province's road network to bring various groups of people together and to end the isolation of those who live in the desert;
- Combatting pollution and limiting the spread of dangers it presents;
- Expanding the phosphate center at Youssoufia;
- Expanding the mines being exploited by private individuals;
- Establishing a hotel school;
- Expanding the [Roukani] stream;
- Expanding the tourist area at Sidi Bou Zid;
- Expanding Oued [Echaba, stream];
- Expanding the rest stations at [Bedouza] and old Essaouira;
- Expanding the Safi airport;
- Extending the coastal road from El-Jadida to Safi;
- Establishing a college at Safi;
- Establishing a higher school of technology;
- Resolving the public lands problem;
- Reclaiming agricultural lands suitable for cultivation and clearing away the rocks.

Drought Damage to Tangier Province Described

92AF0535C Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 28 Feb 92 p 3

[Article by A. [Chaabaoui]: "Drought Effects on Agricultural Sector in Tangier Province, Damage to Large Percentage of Hard Wheat, Beans, Strawberries, Fruits, Vegetables"]

[Text] The late rains in the agricultural season and the ensuing damages, especially in rural agricultural areas have been primary concerns of the Istiqlal Party and the General Union of Farmers.

AL-'ALAM's Tangier bureau went to the most damaged agricultural areas and through the mediation of Hajj

Abdesslam [Adridar], the party's deputy inspector in Tangier Province, met with representative farmers and stockmen in the province. Here is the result of the journalistic investigation of agricultural damage in Tangier Province, particularly in the Asilah agricultural district.

Agricultural Data for Province

The agricultural area of the province is estimated at 129,000 hectares. Of this area, 70,000 hectares are suitable for farming, 39,000 hectares are forest land, and the remaining area is either not arable or pasture land.

The total area of Tangier Province can be divided as follows:

- Private property: 49,300 hectares,
- communal lands: 10,000 hectares
- state property: 7,900 hectares
- religious endowment [awqaf] property: 2,500 hectares.

The area suitable for farming, an estimated 70,000 hectares, is divided as follows:

- grain: 41,400 hectares,
- vegetables: 3,500 hectares,
- legumes: 2,500 hectares,
- fodder: 2,400 hectares,
- peanuts: 5,000 hectares,
- forestation: 200 hectares,
- fallow: 12,000 hectares.

In the field of livestock raising, Tangier Province, with its cool, moist climate and yearly rainfall of 800 mm, is considered an ideal area for livestock raising, especially dairy animals. An estimated 265,420 head of livestock are in the province, divided as follows:

- cattle: 70,000 (15,000 of superior grade),
- sheep: 120,000,
- goats: 60,000,
- horses, draft animals, donkeys: 15,500.

Why Agricultural Sector Was Damaged

All who were questioned agreed that the lateness of the rains caused heavy damage and that the amount of loss was very high. Reasons for this include the lack of irrigation dams, reservoirs, and ground wells for central irrigation in the area of Tnine Sidi Lyamani and Had Rharbia in Asilah district. These two areas are known for production of various kinds of grain; either food varieties, such as hard or soft wheat, barley, etc.; or varieties for processing, such as sunflowers, sugar beets, and peanuts; fodder crops, such as oats, alfalfa, and corn; legumes, such as fava beans, etc.; vegetables, such as potatoes, tomatoes, squash, turnips, peas, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, chard, radishes, etc.; or fruits, such as strawberries, melons, watermelons, and cucumbers.

Agricultural Damage in Province

Hard wheat and fava beans suffered losses between 90 and 100 percent, depending on the area. The fodder crops of oats and alfalfa also were destroyed, forcing the farmers to turn the fields into pastures for lack of any replacement. The ground was not in proper condition for planting sunflowers and peanuts or for planting soft wheat, whose planting season falls in the second half of the so-called "nights." [the 40 longest and coldest nights of the year, from mid-December to mid-January] Planting of barley, corn, and other fodder crops was also halted for the same reason.

As for vegetables, Tangier Province now depends on what comes in from El Ouamra irrigation district (Larache Province), as the peas, tomatoes, squash, potatoes, turnips, carrots, fava beans, cabbage, lettuce, chard, and other vegetables dried up.

As for fruit, the strawberries produced in Asilah were damaged. The ground was not in proper condition for planting melons, watermelons, cucumbers, and various varieties of summer squash. Sugar beets also were ruined.

As for livestock, there was a decrease in pasture cattle, sheep, and goats raised by farmers of the northern coast, Dar Chaoui, Melloussa, and Ksar El Shrir because of the drought, since pasturage on forest or wasteland dried up. While we are mentioning the forests, the trouble that residents of the countryside had with employees of the Water and Forests Department was worse than the drought, especially in the area of Dar Chaoui and Melloussa, where there were unjust fines, harsh rules, and constant harassment.

Although stockmen have been selling their animals in the markets at low prices, butchers are still selling meat at prices between 50 and 60 dirhams per kilogram.

Real Attention to Agricultural Sector Lacking

There are many institutions to serve the agricultural sector in Tangier Province: agricultural centers, agricultural cooperatives, drinking water departments, agricultural lending (giving interest-charging loans for building buildings), agricultural guidance, veterinary medicine, plants, etc. However, this has in no way helped the farmers who have suffered damage. That is the greatest disaster.

What Do Farmers Want?

The farmers in this drought-damaged area are raising their voices to ask that people pay attention to them and learn the extent of the material loss to their crops and animals. Tangier Province, especially the agricultural districts of Tnine Sidi Lyamani and Had Rharbia, should be considered agricultural disaster areas.

The following steps are necessary if the area is to be spared in the future the loss and damage that it now has suffered:

- Agricultural loans and installment payments should be postponed and rescheduled for coming years.

- Irrigation dams and artificial reservoirs should be built.
- Farmers should be enabled to use artificial or hand irrigation.
- There should be drilling for groundwater, in which the region abounds.

As we were concluding this investigation, the farmers urged us to stress the need to demand that interest on agricultural loans be canceled, inasmuch as this is a kind of usury; and God in His own word has forbidden usury: "God blots out usury, but freewill offerings He augments with interest." [Koran 2:276] and [Koran 2:278]: "O believers, fear God; and give up the usury that is outstanding, if you are believers. But if you do not, then take notice that God shall war with you, and His messenger." How true the word of God!

The farmers say that the scarcity, drought, and natural disasters afflicting them are a divine warning to those who charge interest—and the state is the cause!

Effects of Drought on Bircheid Area Examined

92AF0542A Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 1 Mar 92 p 5

[Article by Said Osmani "Survey on Agriculture in Bircheid Area, Effects of Late Rains; Cow Costs 1,500 Dinars Prior to Rains, 4,650 Dinars After Rains; Bircheid Area Encompasses [Said Maachou] Dam But Doesn't Benefit From Its Water; Drilling Wells, Building Fodder Plants, Grain Silos Required To Face Drought Seasons"]

[Text] There are 27,000 farmers in the area, distributed over 288 circles. The cultivable area amounts to 203,000 [hectares], of which 192,000 have been allocated for dryland farming and 11,000 for irrigated farming. An area estimated at 16,310 hectares has been set aside for pasture. An area of 32,410 hectares is unfit for farming and the rest—180 hectares—is forest.

Legal System and Property Structure

- Privately-owned land: 176,183 hectares,
- Common land: 11,617 hectares,
- State-owned land: 15,000 hectares,
- Religious endowments [awqaf]: 200 hectares.

Bircheid area contains natural elements that have made it eligible to play an important role in agricultural activity. The area is characterized by humidity and it gets significant rainfall of 383.47 mm annually. It is also distinguished by its contour and its fertile soil (red clay and sand).

Irrigation by rotary sprinklers has been introduced into the area, as in the case of Lahsasna Circle, where 700 hectares are irrigated by 18 rotary sprinklers. Underground water has played an important role in the success

of this process, considering that the area contains the third largest underground water reservoir in the country.

Agricultural Cooperatives

The area is also distinguished by another activity, embodied in the cooperative movement. It has 24 cooperatives that include 1,269 members and cover a total of 12,563 hectares.

A Significant Dam Network

Sidi Said Ben Maachou Dam was put into operation in 1929. It is 150 meters long and 28.75 meters high. Its storage capacity is 1,500 [as published] cubic meters and its flow rate is 37.8 cubic meters per second. Near the dam is a hydroelectric plant that has four turbines, each with a capacity of 5,200 kilowatts and an annual production capacity of 68 kilowatt/hour.

It is to be noted that neither Bircheid Province nor Settati District benefit from this dam's water, even though the dam is located in the area. Bircheid Province has also witnessed the building of two brick dams in the area of Oulad Abbou, namely the Upper [Lakouasim] Dam and the Lower [Lakouasim] Dam. Each will be able to irrigate 650 hectares, using rotary sprinklers.

Most Important Crops

The area's most important crops include soft and hard wheat, barley, oats, and corn. There are 54,000 hectares of soft wheat; 26,500 hectares of hard wheat; 22,000 hectares of barley; 6,000 hectares of corn; and 5,300 hectares of oats.

As long as we are talking about agricultural resources, then we must note what has been done by the Ben Chaib Farm Group, which has played a major role in developing agriculture in Bircheid area. This group owns 1,200 hectares in the area and it has used this acreage, in addition to 120 coastal hectares, for seed production. [Muni], a variety of soft-grain wheat, is one of the crops produced by this group within the context of seed production in Bircheid area and in Chaouia. Dryland production of this variety has ranged from 60-80 quintars per hectare, thus enabling the variety to rank first in Morocco. In official experiments, the [Muni] variety's productivity has exceeded the other varieties tested with it by 23 percent, including the Marchouch, Jouda, Nesma, and Mabrouka varieties. The Ben Chaib Group won first place award for national productivity for the years 1988, 1989, and 1990. It also won the 1990 World Food Organization award for highest yield in seed production at the Arab and African levels.

Livestock Resources

- Cattle 38,000;
- Sheep 131,000;
- Goats 1,500;
- Horses 15,000;
- Egg-laying poultry 250,000;
- Meat-producing poultry 700,000.

Damage Rates Caused by Late Rains

Since the plentiful rains that fell recently, one cannot speak of drought damage, because the recent rains have somewhat reassured the majority of the area farmers. Normal activity has returned to the market and livestock prices have experienced a relative increase, returning to the level prevailing earlier. For example, a cow offered for sale at the Soualem Sunday market on 16 February 1992 was priced at 1,500 dirhams. On Thursday, 20 February 1992, the same cow was sold for 4,650 dirhams. This example demonstrates clearly that relative normalcy has been restored. However, we have contacted some farmers, and we can say, in short, that the farmer's sole concern is to secure fodder for his livestock. With the scarcity of grass in pastures, fodder prices have risen and there has been extensive speculation. This situation has harmed the farmer greatly, putting him between the rock of the rising fodder prices and the hard place of keeping his fodder reserves for fear that the conditions will become critical. Even though the government and livestock-breeding agencies have surveyed herds with the purpose of supplying farmers with fodder at state-subsidized prices, there has been no change in the farmer's fears concerning the drought, because green fodder is not available to him and it is this fodder that enhances production. Such fodder can become available only with rains.

Moreover, the belated rains have greatly affected the area's commercial activity, resulting in fewer people coming to the weekly markets. Thus, there has been an increase in supply and a drop in demand. We will discuss the possible impact of this situation on vegetable producers in a later piece, which will deal with the damage they have suffered.

To ascertain the impact of late rains on agriculture in the area, we contacted Agricultural Engineer Lahsan Abdan, who closely observes agricultural developments in the area through his supervision of several experiments conducted by the Ben Chaib Farm Group.

[Osmani] What is the damage to date?

[Abdan] [Line missing] and this is due to the plentiful recent rains which continue to fall. However, we can still talk about the impact of late rains. Should rain continue to fall regularly, the agricultural season can be saved because the presence of moisture when [corn] ears and blossoms sprout affects production greatly. Therefore, continued rainfall is essential for saving the current season. But if the rains don't continue, production will be very small due to several factors:

- The small number of ears per square meter,
- Ears will be shorter than their ordinary average,
- Ear yield will be low,
- Grain weight will be low. Consequently, the weight of grains produced per square meter will be low.
- Hay production will be small because grasses will be short at maturity.

[Osmani] What are the steps that must be taken to avoid this impact?

[Abdan] To avoid this impact, one must:

- Use herbicides to eliminate the effect of harmful weeds on the water and fertilizer present in the fields;
- Use nitrogenous fertilizer to promote growth;
- Use pesticides to fight fungal plant diseases, such as Rouille, Septoriose, and Helimenthosporiose, in order to protect plant leaves, because plants get their nutrition through both root and leaf; Moreover, diseases affect the weight of the grain.

[Osmani] The price of these pesticides is somewhat high.

[Abdan] Initially, small farmers were unable to use them. But most farmers use them now, having realized that pesticides contribute to increased production. The issue is clear: Spend 250 dirhams more per hectare and you gain three extra quintars per hectare.

[Osmani] Some fields are still barren even though they have been planted.

[Abdan] Here, we can talk about the damage because it is tied to rainfall volume, both quantitatively and qualitatively. One can wait for 15 days to determine extent of the damage. We must also point out that the impact varies, depending on several factors:

- Planting date,
- Previous crop,
- Soil preparations method,
- Use of seeder is less effective than planting seed manually,
- Grain type and variety,
- Quality of used seed because select seed is guaranteed to be of a good strain, high-quality, and weed resistant.

[Osmani] What types of vegetables have been harmed?

[Abdan] The most important crop produced in Bircheid is potatoes. This crop has suffered damage due to several factors: The crop is cultivated on a large scale in dryland farms; potato prices are low, both at home and abroad; The decreasing purchasing power, which is fundamentally due to the farmer's declining ability to spend on consumption. In any case, the vegetable sector has suffered greatly.

We can note here that other vegetables have benefitted from the early October rains.

[Osmani] What about livestock?

[Abdan] The steps taken recently can alleviate the crisis and bring in subsidized fodder and barley. But with the recent rainfall, activity has been revived in the fodder market. Most farmers will use their fodder reserves or

offer them for sale on the market. For farmers to be able to secure fodder for their livestock, they have to:

1. Rely on irrigated fodder crops, such as clover, corn, and oats and Sudan grass. The distinguishing feature of fodder crops is that they don't require much water and that they complement other fodder varieties, such as barley, chaff, and hay. There are dryland fodder crops also.
2. Build barns, because bad weather and malnutrition have direct effects on livestock.
3. Reduce the number of heads of livestock so the farmer can tend them and can draw up a fodder program that relies on both dry fodder and green fodder.
4. Secure veterinary care, because malnutrition can lead to a greater variety of diseases.

[Osmani] Let us return to grain cultivation. How can we get a significant crop?

[Abdan] Through early plowing, because Chaouia is a semi-arid area. Plowing immediately after the harvest helps the soil preserve water. Also:

- Analyze the soil to find out the type and quantity of fertilizer needed for the crops to be cultivated;
- Use fertilizer at the right time and in the right amount;
- Use select seed;
- Use [a mechanical] seeder to control the amount planted in a hectare;
- Use herbicides and pesticides;
- Use the right fungicide at the right time and with the proper technology;
- Select the grain varieties and types appropriate to each area;
- Set and control the speed of harvesting machinery;
- Care is required for storage, taking into account heat, humidity, and insect and rodent control.

[Osmani] What are the means we must rely on to eliminate damage caused by the drought?

[Abdan] A balance must be established first between the city and the village by working to:

- Set up agro-industry plants, including: processing plants, fodder production plants, workshops to repair of tractors and farm machinery, and flour mills.
- Modernize local silos so farmers can work with them in years of abundance and in drought years without any difficulty; Such silos can be financed by levying a fee of no more than 10 dirhams per imported kilogram of grain.
- Drill wells to make water available at the farmer's command;
- Set up workshops to build [three-part] roads because of the important role they play in developing the countryside;

- Universalize electricity and provide the countryside with telecommunications to encourage workers to settle there;
- Establish vocational training centers so the countryside can get specialized manpower.

We will thus put an end to the damage that can be inflicted on the rural population by drought and will stop emigration to the cities, because lack of work is what motivates the farmer to emigrate.

Vegetable producers find themselves totally unprotected. They are often faced with bankruptcy and they sell their crops at a very low price that doesn't even cover their costs. This is why the government must protect them as it has protected seed producers.

The Bircheid Agricultural Center has supplied us with the following information:

According to the latest report, prepared on 15 February 1992: Thirty percent of the planted grain seeds have been damaged, and 60 percent of the crop will be affected. The economic loss will amount to 90 percent. There is fear that the seeds will not germinate, despite the rainfall.

With the rainfall, the situation will be as follows:

- 30 to 40 percent of the seeds that have not germinated will germinate.
- Because of insufficient hours of sunlight, we will not have proper germination.
- The crop will have low resistance to weeds, fungal diseases, white worm, and string worm.
- Sogeta [Societe Generale des Travaux] Company has re-seeded 30 percent of an area encompassing 4,200 hectares, using rapid-growth seed varieties, such as [Askad]-65, a soft wheat variety, and [Askad]-59, a hard wheat variety. Because germination will be weak, each hectare has been planted with 200 kg of seed.

Phosphoric Acid Exports, Port Volume Figures

92AF0539A Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 2 Mar 92 p 7

[Article by Abderrahim Labidi]

[Text] Maritime transport plays a prominent role because it brings the nations of the world closer together and promotes economic integration, and because of the importance and activity of commercial shipping in Moroccan waters, considered a gathering place for the world's fleets.

Our maritime fleet for transporting petroleum, petrochemicals, and oil made significant progress during 1990. The three vessels owned by the Moroccan firm Petrocab were able to transport 576,000 tons of petroleum materials on domestic trips from the port of Mohammedia to the other ports where this company is active. The company was enhanced by the addition of a 7,700-ton tanker. Significantly, the port of Mohammedia now brings in \$20 million in hard currency annually,

following its modernization and installation of a petroleum bridge [offshore loading platform] containing two centers for mooring. The two centers are linked to the petroleum companies by a dense network of pipelines making it possible to unload crude oil at the rate of 5,000 cubic meters per hour. The centers are able to receive petroleum supertankers of 150,000 tons.

Financial coverage of 1.155 billion Moroccan dirhams was made available, 800 million of which was invested by the state's general budget, while the remaining 355 million dirhams was covered by the Port Utilization Bureau, which, along with the Port of Casablanca and Mohammedia Department of the Ministry of Public Works, prepared the oil platforms and outfitted them with special equipment for unloading and transporting petroleum materials, fighting fires, and combatting pollution.

This has led many oil companies to restructure their activities, renovate their facilities, and modernize, particularly after maritime companies shipped 1.17 million tons of phosphoric acid exports to India, the former Soviet Union, and other countries in 1990, versus 485,000 tons in 1989, an increase of 141 percent. Of this tonnage, 40 percent was carried in our national fleet.

Despite its relative growth in comparison with previous years, the number of vessels is still very small when compared to the size of the foreign fleet which dominates the world petroleum market.

In view of this situation, appropriate measures must be taken to encourage investment in the maritime transport sector to ensure that the Moroccan fleet is developed in a manner that guarantees it as an effective and positive contributor serving the national economy and allowing us to save the hard currency that has been expended on the foreign fleet.

Taking the principle of inter-Arab cooperation as our point of departure, we should note that the Arab Maritime Carriers' Union resolved to establish a unified Arab company for maritime transport during its tenth round in Damascus.

Moreover, the meeting held in Casablanca in August 1981 established the need to conclude an agreement between the Carriers' Union and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], which are [as published] part of the United Nations, under which specialized seminars would be organized for Carriers' Union members on how to lease vessels, on ways of forming a multi-agent company devoted to international transport, and on how to create an Arab Maritime Bureau to conduct shipping analysis and monitor the soundness of petroleum tankers.

As we know, Arab experts took part in preparing these seminars, which concluded by issuing a declaration insisting on the need for a general unification of Arab legislation to help strengthen inter-Arab economic ties.

Reinforcing Morocco's maritime fleet requires instituting a keen and focused Moroccan maritime policy that cares for the social situation of seamen and guarantees them a decent life, and one which also counters the foreign policy of fleet expansion seeking to dominate maritime transport and destroy every opportunity for the formation of national fleets.

This is how the foreign fleet operates when either maritime transport or fishing is concerned.

Effects of Drought in Kenitra, Sidi Kacem

92AF0535B Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 2 Mar 92 p 7

[Article by Brahim Demnati: "Drought Damages Crops in Kenitra, Sidi Kacem Provinces—Citrus Production Drops From 22 to 17 Tons per Hectare"]

[Text] In the wake of the drought that affected the western region, one of Morocco's richest agricultural regions, various crops were damaged by differing degrees. In areas under the jurisdiction of the regional Office for Agricultural Investment encompassing Kenitra and Sidi Kacem provinces, the greatest damage was to sugarcane, with 97 percent of it damaged by the absence of rain during the months of November, December, and January—until 20 February 1992. Here are the details for each crop:

Citrus

The area planted is 17,170 hectares, of which 16,700 hectares usually produce. A single hectare normally produces 22 tons. This season the per-hectare yield did not exceed 17 tons, for a total crop of 290,000 tons. Thus, there was a 5-ton decrease in yield per hectare due to the rainfall shortage.

Grain

The total area cultivated for grain was 201,800 hectares. The area expected to yield well was 20 percent. There was an area of 29 percent whose yield will be medium. The remaining 51 percent of the total area has been lost due to drought and the lateness of the rains.

Sugarcane

Sugarcane suffered heavy losses. An estimated 9,038 hectares were planted in the crop, but 8,748 hectares were damaged due to the lateness of the rains. Only 290 hectares remained that produced sugarcane. The losses affected 97 percent of the total area. A total of 21,750 tons of the crop were produced, on which run the two sugar factories at Dar El Gueddari on the outskirts of Sidi Yahia L'rharb, and at Mechra Bel Ksiri. These factories specialize in milling sugarcane. No more than 3 percent of the area produced.

Taking the price for a ton of sugarcane at 213.57 dirhams, one can compute the loss as: 8,748 hectares X 75 tons/hectare = 656,100 tons X 213.57 dirhams/ton = 15,364,277.00 dirhams [as published].

Sugar Beets

An area of 17,300 hectares was planted in sugar beets. Of this area, 7,000 hectares were ruined. Roughly 4,000 hectares are expected to revive in the wake of recent rains. Thus, the producing area is 6,300 hectares. Based on last year's season (1991), one can say that a hectare of this crop yields 33 tons. This sold, again on the basis of last season, for 277 dirhams, to which a 25-dirham encouragement grant was added per hectare. One can calculate that the losses amounted to 231,000 tons, or a sum of 63,987,000.00 dirhams, to which one should add the 5,775,000.00 dirhams in encouragement grants for the production of the crop.

The rice and sunflower crops have not been planted yet. The western region is first in rice. Its production covers the entire national production.

We have learned that the region's agricultural authorities have allocated 6 kg of fodder per head of cattle as part of an operation to provide feed to livestock, notwithstanding the fact that a cow can eat this quantity in a day and a night. Can this be considered to alleviate the crisis affecting livestock raisers in the western region?

In the wake of the recent rains, livestock, which had been selling at depressed prices in the region's markets, have seen a resurgence.

Increased Activity in Maritime Transport Reported

92AF0490C Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 22 Feb 92 p 1

[Commentary by Abderrahim Loubeidi]

[Text] Despite the difficulties of the maritime transport market last year as a result of the Gulf war, our merchant marine fleet was able to transport 266,000 tons of fruit and early Moroccan crops, versus 460,000 tons of fruit and crops transported on foreign vessels leased by Moroccan shipping companies.

Additionally, our passenger transport fleet, composed of five vessels, enabling it to transport 491,254 passengers and 65,874 automobiles in 1990, versus 848,798 passengers and 139,047 automobiles registered in the [first] nine months of 1991, which experienced a conspicuous rise in activity in the shipping sector, despite the small number of vessels. This rise was 10 percent for passengers and 32 percent for automobiles.

As a reminder, the number of vessels in the Moroccan fleet has shrunk compared to previous years, which saw the establishment of maritime companies in various national ports.

The shipping sector needs government support and huge investments from the private sector for it to progress as it must, which means the reinforcement of the importance of support and the feasibility of investments. Moroccan ports are linked to about 76 foreign ports, up from 10 foreign ports in the beginning of the 1970s. This

confirms that the activity of the Moroccan fleet is stoutly linked to our deep-rooted history in the seafaring world.

We call for a policy of hope and of envisioning the possibilities, to nationally achieve Morocco's maritime interests and to hasten action to develop them locally and internationally. [We want] to open the way for the shipping sector to be a dynamic instrument to serve our national economy in a way that would ensure the support of the national treasury and encourage the employment of the Moroccan workforce, with a view to satisfying the needs of this sector—which grows from one day to the next in every skilled field—in order to achieve, in the end, total Moroccanization of the crews on both private passenger carriers and on goods and produce transports.

It is worth pointing out that 90 percent of Moroccan crews receive naval training at the Higher Institute for Naval Studies, which graduated about 124 sea-bound officers, including 9 foreign officers.

Training has also been organized to complement experience, and to retrain 139 new student officers abroad in various staffs and in various technical qualifications. The naval centers, in Casablanca, Safi, Laayoune, and Al Hoceima, are working to train 227 technicians qualified to work in the coastal ocean fishing sector. This is in response to many calls from professionals via the pages of the "AL-'ILM" [SCIENCE] newspaper.

Mr. Bensalem Smili, Minister of Ocean Fisheries and Merchant Marine had, during the opening of the Round-table on Coastal Fishing held in Rabat on 25 October 1991, praised the seamen and the important role played by the coastal fishing sector at the economic and social level. He also stressed to his ministry's officials the importance of opening a dialogue between them and the seamen in order to achieve positive goals in the public interest.

For the record, also, it was possible for the officials to join the Ministry of Public Works to exploit this phenomenon, in view of the many problems experienced by the Moroccan ports, which are hampered by the lack of

facilities and essential social installations and the non-uniformity of daily withholdings from fish market sales, which are directed by the Bureau of Port Usage.

In the bulk of Moroccan ports, 5 percent of fish market sales are withheld, while in Casablanca, 6 percent of sales are withheld, much to the indignation of fishermen.

What made things even worse is that the dialogue initiated by the former official about the Port of Casablanca fish market was canceled completely when he was replaced. This proves that the only goal of the officials in the Port Usage Bureau is to make a profit, even at the expense of the seamen, who risk their lives and livelihoods for the cause of advancing and enriching this sector.

Making the maritime laws uniform in all Morocco's ports, without exception, would generate confidence in the dealings among professionals and the Port Usage Bureau management on the other. We have constantly applauded the officials' efforts, both for the cleanup operation, and the for the building and modernization the cold storage in the port.

However, the miserable conditions that have existed in the fishing port of Casablanca since the beginning of 1992 demand our criticism, given that its highest goal is to achieve positive results.

It is demanded of officials that they have a constantly welcoming and practical attitude to bridge the distance between management and the seamen, as they are the foundation of port activity.

We hope that the Ministry of Ocean Fisheries and Merchant Marine will exert more efforts to support the presence of the Moroccan fleet on the international maritime scene.

We also hope to reduce the tax system and unify the sectors in all of our national ports by working on spreading maritime education to serve the general interest. The Bureau of Port Usage's seat in the administrative council to represent the seamen is a self-evident necessity!

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